

Message

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Sent: 3/22/2019 3:51:24 PM
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Subject: Sierra Club PR - ITC

FYI -

ITC Fire Response Causes Toxic Contamination of Houston Ship Channel
PFAS Firefighting Foam Highly Toxic to Human Health

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Contact:

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Houston, Texas -- The response to the #ITCFire petrochemical disaster has spawned a secondary toxic release. More than 130,000 gallons of toxic Class B fire fighting foams have been used to extinguish the chemical storage facility fire at the Intercontinental Terminal Company, combined with elevated levels of benzene that caused local authorities to issue a shelter-in-place order on Thursday.

PFAS-containing fire fighting foams have contaminated hundreds of waterways and drinking water systems across the U.S. The chemicals cannot be broken down, and persist indefinitely in the environment. Right now PFAS foams and other contaminants from the fire response are running off into the Houston Ship Channel, with local toxicologists and fishers expressing concern for the health of communities and ecosystems connected to the Ship Channel.

PFAS foam is highly toxic to human health – both to emergency responders who apply the chemicals and to people who eat contaminated fish and shellfish or drink contaminated water. The ITC company has a long history of breaking environmental laws with illegal releases of contamination into the air and local waterways.

In response, Sierra Club Dirty Fuels Gulf Coast Organizer Bryan Parras issued the following statement:

“Sierra Club has issued recommendations for local and state governments to immediately contain the toxic run-off, test water samples for PFAS chemicals, and ensure pollution does not extend through the Ship Channel into the Bay. If these PFAS chemicals reach the Galveston Bay, they will contaminate fish stocks and sediments for centuries. Our health has already been compromised by this ongoing disaster; already more toxic chemicals have been released because of the ITC fire than were released in the second storm of pollution post-Hurricane Harvey. Now on top of that we’re learning that dangerous toxins are being released into our local waterways, toxins that can never be cleaned up once they are released.

“Who do our local elected officials represent? The people who elected them, or the polluters who are poisoning us?”

About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.5 million members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing

power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org.